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## Did you know?



The recent increase in the sales of National Lottery scratchcard products in retail outlets is greater than the entire chewing gum market in Ireland!

Are you making the most from this increased interest in National Lottery scratchcard products?

## CSNA concerned by complaints from anti-mask and anti-vaccination groups

The association has brought to the attention of two government ministers, Leo Varadkar and Damien English, what it considers to be an appalling abuse of process by one of the statutory bodies under the control of their department.

The Workplace Relations Commission (WRC), with headquarters in Ballsbridge, D4, investigates and adjudicates on all manners of complaints, including allegations of discrimination which would, if proven, be offensive to the Equality Acts.

We are most concerned that a number of complaints and suggestions of discrimination against our members have been lodged with the WRC as part of a coordinated campaign by anti-mask, anti-vaccination groups.

It is alleged that a shop's refusal to allow an unmasked person entry and/or service in the store was discrimination on the stated grounds that the person was suggesting that they had a disability and was entitled to enter the store and obtain service without needing to "mask-up".

When these notifications were sent to WRC, they had the option of refusing to act, but instead, sought to engage with the store's management, using State resources to interrogate the actions of stores that were carrying out their legal and societally responsible duties.

The WRC has now seen fit to offer its mediation services between these people and our members' stores! This implies that there is a "case" worth hearing, a case that will use up



An anti-vaccine protest on the march in Dublin from the Department of Education towards the headquarters of the INTO, held on 18 August

many resources of the State, (administrative, facilities and personnel) as well as the time and loss of earnings of store management and the costs of arranging for staff and cover.

The CSNA has constantly warned government that they needed to stop ignoring these agitators and prosecute them for the very many breaches of the law they perpetrate. It is not fair or just to expect frontline workers and their employers to put up with this abuse and it is even more galling to be subjected to inquisition by an arm of the State.

## Don't keep your weekend and casual staff in the dark!



All your part-time, recently hired and relief staff need to be trained on potential pitfalls such as phone phishing

It is very frustrating and annoying when the actions (or inactions) of your staff cause problems, many of which have negative financial implications for the business.

**You need to ask yourself - how did this happen?**

**Could it have been avoided?**

**Are others (including myself) equally at fault?**

**Most importantly, you need to take immediate actions to prevent recurrence.**

Very frequently, we find that the errors and omissions that cause the problems are down to a lack of adequate training, particularly with instructions to part-time, recently hired and relief staff.

With the numbers of regular staff

absent due to leave and possibly isolation, we have relied on those less familiar with certain roles and duties to "keep the show on the road"; it is vital that you or your manager ensure these staff are acquainted with the potential pitfalls:

- Age restricted products
- Quantity restricted products
- Policy on till procedures
- Phone phishing
- Customer service
- Newspaper and magazine processes (the very best tip we can give you on this is to watch the CSNA training on the CSNA website).

There are an enormously disproportionate number of costly errors that are caused by untrained staff; the solution is in your hands.



## CSNA seeks further information on research used by Alcohol Action Ireland



Alcohol Action Ireland (AAI), a charity funded almost entirely by grants from the HSE, Department of Health and, on occasion, the National Lottery, issued a press release alongside its annual report, in which the CEO made a number of disparaging remarks about retailers' commitment to public health.

In a democracy, people are entitled to express a point of view subject to basic acceptable criteria, including the need to be truthful.

We have sought further information from the owners (School of Public Health, UCC) of the unpublished research from which AAI has formed the view that a majority of alcohol retailers ignored the four key components of the (structural separation) Section 22 part of the recently commenced Public Health (Alcohol) Act.

Retailers of essential products and their hardworking staff have been at the frontline since this Covid-19 pandemic started and have striven assiduously to maintain and promote best public health principles. The CSNA will not allow what we believe are flippant, prejudiced comments to be made by publicly funded individuals or groups.

In a separate piece of timely research, conducted by a Masters of Public Health student at University College Cork (fieldwork, May 2021), an assessment of the four key provisions of the public health alcohol legislation, found only a 58% compliance amongst a sample group of 90 retailers. ■

## CSNA CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any queries regarding CSNA services or membership please contact the office in Naas, Co. Kildare on **045-535050** or by email to [info@csna.ie](mailto:info@csna.ie)/[www.csna.ie](http://www.csna.ie)

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